

Center for Academic Excellence

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PRESS RELEASE

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The Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence hosted its annual symposium on April 27, 2010 in the New Student Center on the campus at Norfolk State University. This year's symposium was added as a part of Norfolk's NATO Festival Week, a long standing festival in Norfolk to honor and bring recognition to NATO's contribution to Norfolk and the world. In the morning, as is a four year tradition for NATO festival week, a high school forum was hosted by the NSU IC-CAE in the L. Douglas Wilder Performing Arts Center on Norfolk State University's campus. All five local area high schools in Norfolk were represented: Booker T. Washington, Maury High School, Granby High School, Lake Taylor High School, and Norview High School. Each school was given the topic, "France's re-entrance into NATO" and was told to make a short performance to relate to this topic. In addition to skit performances which addressed the topic, there also was a separate essay contest. The whole forum was very engaging and it was interesting to see how each school interpreted history and made it their own.

Before the formal evening symposium began, from 5:30 – 7:00 pm, a reception was held in the New Student Center, where guests had an opportunity to mingle with the invited speakers and panelists and view research from NSU faculty and students, which was showcased around the room.

This year's annual symposium was entitled, "Exploring the Relationship between NATO and the Intelligence Community- Challenges, Requirements, and the Role of Intelligence Community Centers of Academic Excellence." Dr. Carol Pretlow (NSU Professor of Political Science) gave the occasion and set the stage for evaluating how intelligence and NATO communities must engage in the future. Many Norfolk State students and faculty attended this insightful event and were joined by government officials as well as members of the armed forces and NATO. Senator, Dr. Yvonne Miller, gave a warm welcome to those in attendance.



NSU IC-CAE Board and Senator Yvonne Miller

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Mr. Jim Grant (USAF, retired), chair of the NSU IC-CAE board, introduced the keynote speaker, Major General Jaap Willemse (Royal Netherlands Air force, Assistant Chief of Staff Command Control, Communication, Intelligence at NATO Allied Command Transformation). Major General Jaap Willemse spoke about the history of NATO and its importance in the world's development. He spoke about the history of NATO and highlighted the advancements in intelligence through the years. Because of the technological advances and changes, NATO intelligence issues have become more complex. He finished by saying that the need for intelligence is more than ever that will address a broader spectrum of expertise.



Major General Jaap Willemse giving the Keynote address

Responses to Major Willemse's keynote address were given from US Intelligence workforce perspective by Vice Admiral Jake Jacoby (USN, retired). As the former Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and currently the Executive Vice President of CACI International, Inc, he spoke more directly about the opportunities for students in the intelligence communities. Admiral Jacoby stressed that the intelligence community is a very diverse place to work and there is a job for every discipline. Following his presentation a panel, which included Dr. Camellia Okpodu (NSU IC-CAE Director and Professor of Biology); Ms. Christyl Johnson (Executive Director, National Science and Technology Council), Mr. Sunjay Nair (ODNI Program Manager); Mr. James Doug Lawrence (Senior Program Manager ODNI); and Mr. Bill Carney (Central Intelligence Agency).

The panelists spoke about different opportunities for students who are interested in working within the intelligence communities. They followed-up with how students should prepare, what kind of application process and what specific jobs and internships are available. This time was encouraging and enlightening for the students in attendance at the symposium.

Norfolk State students were recognized for their involvement in the Center. Vanessa Lasko, an Interdisciplinary Studies major, was given the NSU IC-CAE Medal for completion of all required classes for the National Security Certificate program. Mr. Oscar Gary, a Journalism major and Ms. Jasmine Hall, a Mass Media major, were both given certificates for their involvement in the Center - both are traveling in the summer of 2010 as recipients of critical language scholarships offered through the NSU IC CAE program.

The Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence is funded through a grant from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). The goal of the center is to prepare students for leadership positions in government service with a specific emphasis on developing critical skills necessary to begin careers in the Intelligence Community. For further information, contact Dr. Camellia Okpodu, Professor of Biology and NSU IC-CAE Program Director, at cmokpodu@nsu.edu or at 757-823-8957.